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# Replacing Those VIPs (Very Important Papers)

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**It's always a good idea to keep important papers in a safe place such as a safe deposit box. Sometimes, though, such papers are lost, stolen or destroyed. This fact sheet tells how to go about replacing some important documents from birth certificates to driver's licenses, passports to savings bonds. It provides addresses and fees for agencies that can provide replacements.**

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**V**ery important papers (VIPs) are personal documents that you may need at some point during your lifetime, for a variety of reasons. For example, a birth certificate is necessary to prove age when obtaining a driver's license, when acquiring a Social Security number, or as proof of U.S. citizenship when applying for a passport.

VIPs should be kept for the following reasons: to assist in preparing tax returns; for other business matters, in case of a crisis such as death, fire or theft; and to avoid delays in the processing of insurance, military, veteran's and other benefits.

VIPs include documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates, deeds, leases, contracts, wills, copies of tax returns, insurance policies, military papers and Social Security records.

Although many household records are replaceable, some quite easily (for example, copies of insurance policies are available from your insurance company, and canceled checks are usually available from the institution that holds your checking account), replacing some VIPs can be costly and troublesome. The more difficult and expensive a record is to replace, the safer its storage should be.

Your valuable papers should be kept in fireproof and theftproof storage either in a home safe or bank safe deposit box. Should such records be lost, stolen or destroyed, this MontGuide tells how to replace them.

## Birth and death certificates

*In Montana* To replace birth or death certificates for people who were born or died in Montana, you may order online or download an application form from the Web at—  
<http://vhsp.dphhs.state.mt.us/>

Click on "How Do I Find—?" and then "Birth and Death Certificates." If you don't have access to a computer, mail or fax your request for an application form to—

**Office of Vital Statistics  
Department of Public Health  
and Human Services  
111 N. Sanders, Room 209  
P.O. Box 4210  
Helena MT 59604-4210  
Telephone (406) 444-2685  
Fax (406) 444-1803**

The cost is \$12 for the first copy and \$5 for each additional copy of the same record. The cost to search for records is \$10 for the first 5 years, then \$1 for each additional year. The office also charges a \$5.50 shipping and handling fee for fax and online credit card orders.

*In another state* For births or deaths outside of Montana, an official

certificate should be on file in that state. These certificates are typically prepared by physicians, funeral directors, other professional attendants or hospital authorities and are permanently filed in the central vital statistics office of the state, city or outlying area where the event occurred. The federal government does not maintain files of such records.

To obtain a certified copy of a birth or death certificate from another state, order online at—  
<http://vhsp.dphhs.state.mt.us/>  
Click on "How Do I Find—?" and then "Birth and Death Certificates." Click on either "Order a copy of a Montana birth certificate online" or "Order a copy of a Montana death certificate online;" the headings notwithstanding, either will take you to the government's VitalCheck site, where you select the state from which you need either a birth or death certificate.

*Outside the U.S.* For birth records of persons born abroad, write for replacement Form DS-1350 (Certification of Birth), which contains the same information as Form FS-240 (Consular Report of Birth Abroad). Write or go to—

**U.S. Department of State  
Passport Services  
Vital Records Section  
1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 510  
Washington DC 20522-1705  
[http://travel.state.gov/consular\\_records.html](http://travel.state.gov/consular_records.html)**

If you're applying for a replacement FS-240, enclose a notarized affidavit by a parent or legal representative. This affidavit must state the name, date, and place of birth, and the whereabouts of the original form.

The cost for a replacement FS-240 is \$30. The cost is \$30 for the first DS-1350 (Certification of Birth) and \$20 for each additional copy issued at the same time per document requested. Send a check or money order payable to the U.S. Department of State. The address above is also used to obtain a "Report of the Death of an American Citizen."

## Citizenship and naturalization papers

An Application for Replacement of Naturalization/Citizenship Document (Form N-565) is used to request citizenship and naturalization papers. The fee for such papers is \$155. You may download the form from the Web at—

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/n-565.htm>

You may also obtain a copy by writing or visiting—

**Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services**  
2800 Skyway Drive  
Helena MT 59601

Telephone (800) 870-3676  
[www.bcis.gov/graphics/fieldoffices/helena/aboutus.htm](http://www.bcis.gov/graphics/fieldoffices/helena/aboutus.htm)

This office is closed Wednesdays.

## Driver's license

To replace a Montana driver's license, you will need to complete a form from your local driver services station. You will need to present a birth certificate (or two other forms of identification with your full name and date of birth) and a check for \$10. If the documents are acceptable, the examiner will take your photograph. The forms and information are then sent to the Montana Motor Vehicle Department, in Helena, where a duplicate license is issued.

If you lost your license within six months of its expiration date, you may apply for a renewal instead of a duplicate. Address all questions to—

**Montana Motor Vehicle Department Driver Services**  
Scott Hart Building, Second Floor  
Helena MT 59601

e-mail [mvd@state.mt.us](mailto:mvd@state.mt.us)

[www.doj.state.mt.us/department/motorvehicledivision.asp](http://www.doj.state.mt.us/department/motorvehicledivision.asp)

In Montana, call (406) 444-3292 and then press 2, then 1

From out of state, call (406) 444-4590

## Income tax returns

*Montana returns* To receive replacement copies of Montana state income tax returns for the years 1997-2002 (based on a five-year statute of limitations), write—

**Income Tax Division**  
Montana Department of Revenue  
Sam W. Mitchell Building  
P.O. Box 5805  
Helena MT 59604

Telephone (406) 444-6900  
Fax (406) 444-0629

A letter is required to verify your signature. Information will not be provided over the telephone. If you contact the Income Tax Division in person, be prepared to offer photo identification and a Social Security number. There is a fee of 50 cents per page for photocopies.

*Federal returns* For copies of federal income tax returns, call the nearest Department of the Treasury office or IRS office and request Form 4506 (Request for Copy or Transcript of Tax Form). To find your local office, go online to

[www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html)

and click on the state in which the federal income returns were filed.

In Montana, there are IRS offices in Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell and Missoula.

If you do not have Internet access, call (800) 829-1040.

## Insurance policies

To replace lost or destroyed insurance policies, contact the agent or company providing the coverage. You may be required to complete a form, pay a fee for duplicate copies, or both. The policy number will be needed for this request.

## Military discharge papers

To obtain copies of military discharge papers, request Standard Form 180 (SF-180) from any office of the Veterans Administration, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Red Cross, a Veterans association or a military recruiter. Standard Form 180 may be download over the Web from—

[www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st\\_louis/military\\_personnel\\_records/standard\\_form\\_180.html](http://www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st_louis/military_personnel_records/standard_form_180.html)

Send the completed form to—

**National Personnel Records Center**  
Military Personnel Records  
9700 Page Avenue  
St. Louis MO 63132-5100

The National Personnel Records Center responds only to mailed or faxed requests and requests made via online communication. The fax number is—

(314) 801-9195

The Center's Web address is—

[www.archives.gov/research\\_room/vetrecs](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs)

The Veterans Administration holds all military discharge papers for Montanans who were discharged after 1978. Contact—

**Benefits Information and Assistance**  
Veterans Administration  
Fort Harrison  
Helena MT 59636

Telephone (406) 443-8756

**Veterans Information Hotline:**  
(800) 827-1000

**Montana Veterans Affairs Division:**  
[www.state.mt.us/dma/Veterans/mvad/index.htm](http://www.state.mt.us/dma/Veterans/mvad/index.htm)

To locate Veterans Administration (VA) field offices in Montana, go to—

[www.state.mt.us/dma/Veterans/mvad/Addresses.htm](http://www.state.mt.us/dma/Veterans/mvad/Addresses.htm)

If discharge papers were recorded in the county clerk's office at the time of discharge, they may be replaced by contacting that office (Registrar of Deed) in the county where they were recorded.

## Marriage licenses, marriage dissolutions, adoption decrees

*In Montana* To replace marriage licenses or dissolution or adoption decrees for events that occurred in

Montana, contact the Clerk of the District Court in the county where the marriage, dissolution or adoption occurred. If you are unsure which county the marriage license, dissolution or adoption decree was issued by, contact or write—

**Montana Office of Vital Statistics  
Department of Public Health  
and Human Services  
111 N. Sanders, Room 209  
P.O. Box 4210  
Helena MT 59604**

Telephone (406) 444-2685  
Fax (406) 444-1803

*Out of Montana* If the marriage, dissolution or adoption occurred outside Montana, contact the District Court of the county where the marriage, dissolution or adoption took place, or write to the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the Department of Health at the capital of the state in which the event occurred. Go to—  
<http://vhsp.dphhs.state.mt.us/>

## Passport

*Lost in the U.S.* If your passport is lost or stolen in the United States, report the loss or theft immediately to the Department of State or to the nearest Passport Agency. The loss or theft should also be reported to local police.

*Lost abroad* If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, it should be reported immediately to the nearest United States embassy or consular office.

A passport is a traveler's principal means of identification abroad, and its loss is very serious. To replace the passport, you must complete Form DS-11 (Application for Passport) and, if your passport had not expired, Form DS-64 (Statement Regarding Lost or Stolen Passport). Whether lost or stolen in the United States or overseas, report the lost or stolen passport to the following address—

**U.S. Department of State  
Passport Services  
Consular Lost/Stolen Passport Section  
1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 500  
Washington DC 20036**

or call any time, day or night,  
(202) 955-0430

Web site: [http://travel.state.gov/lost\\_stolen.html](http://travel.state.gov/lost_stolen.html)

## Property deeds

*In Montana* If the property deed was recorded, contact the Clerk and Recorder in the county where the property is located. Copies are certified for a fee, which may vary from county to county. If the property deed was not properly recorded, you may have to obtain a new deed from the previous owner.

*Out of Montana* To replace lost or destroyed deeds, contact the Clerk and Recorder at the courthouse for the county where the property is located.

## Social Security Card

To replace your Social Security card, fill out Form SS-5 (Application for Social Security Card). Use this form for a replacement card, to change your name because of marriage or otherwise, or a change of address within your Social Security file. To download this form, go to—

[www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html](http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html)

Contact the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 if you need additional help, or write—

**Office of Public Inquiries  
Social Security Administration  
Windsor Park Building  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore MD 21235  
[www.ssa.gov/reach.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/reach.htm)**

## Savings bonds/notes

Savings bonds/notes that are lost, stolen, mutilated, or destroyed may be replaced free of charge as long as the Bureau of Public Debt can establish that the bonds have not been cashed. To assure that the bonds can be traced, owners should keep records of bond serial numbers, issue dates, registration, and social security or taxpayers identification numbers in a safe place separate from the bonds.

To get your bond replaced, request Form PDF-1048 (Claim for Lost, Stolen or Destroyed United States Savings Bonds) from a local bank. If the form is not available at your local bank, it may be downloaded from

<http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/sav/sav/lost.htm>

Scroll down to “If your bond is lost or destroyed after you receive it” and then click on Form PDF-1048.

On this form provide approximate issue date along with complete names, addresses, social security number that appeared on the bond, and the bond serial number. If you don't know the serial number, write “unknown” in the space provided. If the bond owner is a minor, the form should be signed by both parents, and the minor's age and social security should also be included.

The completed application should be signed by the owner(s) and others named in the missing bonds' registrations, notarized, and sent to—

**Bureau of the Public Debt  
Office of Investor Services  
Parkersburg WV 26106-1328**

Telephone (304) 480-6112  
Fax (304) 480-6010  
e-mail [savbonds@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:savbonds@bpd.treas.gov)

Replacement bonds will bear the date of original issue.

## Vehicle title

*In Montana* Complete a form for a duplicate certificate of title at your county treasurer's office. To find that office, go to—

[www.doj.state.mt.us/driving/countytreasurers.asp](http://www.doj.state.mt.us/driving/countytreasurers.asp)

or contact the Motor Vehicle Division at the address provided below.

(At the time this fact sheet went to press, there was a \$3 fee per duplicate title for snowmobiles and boats, a \$4 fee for off-highway vehicles, and a \$10 fee for all other vehicles and trailers. These fees rise to a uniform \$10 as of Jan. 1, 2004.)

The form may be downloaded from—

[www.doj.state.mt.us/driving/forms/mv7.pdf](http://www.doj.state.mt.us/driving/forms/mv7.pdf)

Return the form with payment to—

**Department of Justice  
Motor Vehicle Division  
Title and Registration Bureau  
1032 Buckskin Drive  
Deer Lodge MT 59722**

Telephone (406) 846-6000  
E-mail [mvdtitleinfo@state.mt.us](mailto:mvdtitleinfo@state.mt.us)

*Out of Montana* The address to contact in other states is available from your county treasurer.

## Will

If your will is misplaced or destroyed, contact the attorney who prepared it. If your circumstances have changed, a new will may be appropriate. For further information, request our free MontGuide on Wills (MT198906HR) from your tribal or county Extension office, or download it from—

[www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt8906.html](http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt8906.html)

## NOTE AND DISCLAIMER

*The fees quoted in this publication were correct as of the date of publication (January 2005). However, because agencies change their fees from time to time, it's a good idea to double-check with them before ordering copies or services.*

*Similarly, at the time of publication all the contact information provided here—addresses, telephone and fax numbers, E-mail addresses and phone numbers—was verified. But this information, too, is subject to change.*



<http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt9513.html/>

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